IT'S THE INCREDIBLE
# Mutant Pop
MAILORDER CATALOG
catalog 21–G
Dec. 2021

# Out Now: Ded Bugs, Rocknroll Television, Radio Buzzkills, Automatics SRCDs

Another four Mutant Pop Short-Run CDs are in the world in December, running the final total for 2021 to 22 SRCD reissues and new releases, including 14 new covers. My new releases cluster like this intentionally in order to keep things cheap and collectible. Cover cards are printed in "pairs" of two, with the final cut to size made by me by hand with a fancy-pants rotary paper cutter. Printing costs are thereby chopped about 15%, with shipping costs from my printer in Los Angeles similarly reduced. (Covers still wind up costing me about $115 per title, mind you, but things could be worse...)

Releasing new titles also involves a certain amount of work — packing mailers and standing in line at the post office, sending out promos, making wholesale announcements to mailorders, and so on. Jointly releasing two pairs of two effectively reduces my total time investment, lowers postage costs to those of you collecting the series (making the freebie bonus 5th disc possible), and streamlines the entire process.

Anyway, I am finding a comfortable pace: a cycle in which two pairs plus a secret bonus something-something are cranked out with a catalog following shortly afterwards. Doing this monthly is too much though — six weeks makes for a more rational pace. So don't worry when these catalogs don't show up monthly — the interval will henceforth be a bit longer. Look for Catalog 22-A towards the middle of February.

Anyway, that's enough official business, on with the show!

I'm super excited about all four of these releases but the one that has had max playtime in my car is **MP-1047 Ded Bugs: *Raid In The Bug House*** SRCD. The title, fairly obviously, plays upon the title of the McRackins SRCD released in November, *Raiding The Hen House,* with the Raid reference also invoking the well-known aerosol insecticide. The title is not just a cutesy in-joke pun though, since Matt Bug and the boys similarly gave me carte blanche to pick *whatever I wanted* from the band's four fantastic albums for this release. The result absolutely rocks the house, I'm simply thrilled with it!

Matt steered my choices a little, urging me to bump two songs in favor of two others. Good move by him. This is not a "greatest hits" package or a pack of live show faves, but a structured release akin to distillation of the hottest album side imaginable. SRCDs will always put a premium on hooks'n'harmonies — short songs with buzzing punk rock guitars to be ingested at maximum volume. This nails it! While I feel like all four of the releases this month are major successes, none are better than this set of St. Louis smashes recorded from 1998 to 2003.

One thing I like best about this one, a subtle little detail, is the way the sequence starts and ends with radio static. This was totally unintentional, it was just the way the seven-song program laid out, kicking off with my very favorite Ded Bugs song ("Do The Jump") and ending with the band's tribute to The Dickies ("Ponk Rawk").

As I got more and more plays into this one the universe started to make sense to me — not only do Ded Bugs wear their Dickies influences proudly, with their huge guitar hooks, zany lyrics, and luxurious harmonies, but *the Mutant Pop sound itself is more or less "Dickiescore,"* to coin a phrase. Nothing against the Ramones or Ramonescore, I love them and it, but much MP stuff owes more to the pop-punk Hall of Famers from Van Nuys, CA. *I simply love this release!*

## INSIDE

• TC reviews Larry Livermore's *How to Ru(i)n a Record Label*
• Top Releases of 2021 in 25 words or less...

Revised second edition, Jan. 2022 (*adds pictures, fixes typos, tightens essay*)

Pairing with Ded Bugs is another instalment of Mutant Pop's ongoing Canadian invasion, **MP-1056 Rocknroll Television: *Stuck On My Mind*** SRCD. We return to French Canada for these cats, a buddy band of The Beldons/Fab Habs from Montreal. RNRTV recorded their first demo in 2006, released their first album in 2008, and put out their most recent, third, album in 2018. This six-song sequence is a "minus tracks" treatment of their classic second album, *!Dumb Channel—Channel Dumb?* It's thirteen minutes of pure bliss — earworm-caliber tunesmithery and a bubbly organ in the mix providing a signature sound.

The fifth track is worthy of particular note. "Depression" is the title, the subject is self-evident. This song strikes me as perhaps the smartest lyrical treatment of this sensitive topic since <*insert name of your favorite After School Special song here*>, absolutely brilliant, next-level songwriting. Depression is a tough thing; this tune mourns its associated loss without being mournful and somehow manages to convey the deep incapacitation correlated with the ailment without self-pity. The tune's matter-of-factness should resonate both with those of us who suffer from the condition and those of us who do not. Great art.

If I have one criticism of this sequence, I should have probably sucked it in and went one song longer by tagging on the hit "New Wave Sci-Fi." Somehow it didn't seem to fit lyrically, but today I find myself second-guessing that call. Done is done. Nevertheless, this release is fantastic, a dead center hit on the deck of the Mutant Pop sonic battleship. *BOOOOM!!!*

Max Television provided not just one, but *four* terrific band photo cover-shots for this release. He was loose about which to use, I was loose, so for fun we put it to a vote on my Facebook page (**www.facebook.com/tim.davenport.984**). You see the winner. I'd like to do another release with this band in 2022 using another of those cover shots — we'll see how that goes.

The other pair of releases this month features two more "minus tracks" sequences — one a reissue of a long out-of-print Mutant Pop classic and the other a distillation of the best of the best of an album by one of the hottest pop-punk bands doing their thing in 2021. Something old and something pretty new, in other words...

Beginning with the classic, we have **MP-1041 The Automatics: *Abridged*** SRCD. The self-titled debut album by The Automatics (MP-501) was first released in 1996. I managed to sell 2,000 copies of it — a lot for a Mutant Pop release and an inconceivably large number of *anything* today — before it went out of print about 20 years ago. It was subsequently licensed as an LP by Mooster Records in 2016 and that sold out, too. The band's other two MP CDs, *Twenty Golden Greats!* and *Go Bananas!* are also gone, gone, gone. So here I am in 2021, Mr. "Making CDs Cool Again," with zero CDs in print by the most-released band on Mutant Pop. That seemed so *wrong!*

However CD albums in 2021 are a financial catastrophe in the best-case scenario; reissuing one that half of you already own would result in a bloodbath so gruesome that people would post video of it to Kaotic or Crazy Shit..

Release the whole album as an SRCD? No way! That is not what I am doing with that format. If you're not yet on the train, just keep listening to 'em, you'll get it — but that's not what they are about...

Ahh, "Minus tracks" to the rescue... You see, the seminal document of the band, the one essential CD of the four Automatics full-lengths, much to my surprise, was not the self-titled debut but *20 Golden Greats!*, the 1997 cost-recovering quickie. Catchy one-minute songs played one after another in rapid succession — that's what The Automatics were all about. (I saw them about seven times live, I know whereof I speak.)

"What if?" I asked myself. What if the superior one minute songs of the debut album were distilled into a new *10 Golden Greats!*-type release: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10. Just sort those into a rational sequence and — *voilá!* — a release by The Automatics that not only gets the band back into print in the shiny round format but also makes for a killer SRCD release in its own right.

I am usually unconcerned about how things sell but I am watching this one. Will people take a chance on it? Will they feel like they already own the stuff and give it a miss? Will they love it? Will they shrug their shoulders and file it in their collection after one quick listen? I just don't know. I am interested.

I do know this: I'd very much like to do the same to *Go Bananas!* — it can be fundamentally transformed into something fresh and new by the same process of addition through subtraction. What a great true document of The Automatics — shaving off the longer pop songs and going short and fast and fun with it: *10GG, 10MGG, Abridged, Bananas Peeled*. Maybe *Another 10 Golden Greats!* pulled from singles and comp tracks as well and you'd have 50 tunes running one hour — wouldn't that be fun?

"Last but not least" is a cliché but in this case it is also true: **MP-1057 The Radio Buzzkills: *Can't Wait Forever*** SRCD is as fine a piece of poppy punk rock as anything could ever be. This one has a bit of an origins story, bear with me while I tell the tale.

I did not expect to bring back MP in 2021, it just sort of happened after I got excited by a few bands. It took me a while to figure out if I wanted to rename the label for the relaunch (no), what means of funding I wanted to pursue (wholesale sales to mailorders and stores), and what format I wanted to do in the current LP-crazy, streaming-dominated environment (counterintuitively: compact discs). I looked around and priced things out and figured, hell, it only costs $700 or something to make 300 CDs these days and I should be able to sell 100 copies in the US and another 100 between Japan and Europe within 12 months — easy peasy, those are baby numbers...

I like to drive the label car fast, fast, fast — so I would do *nine albums* by the end of the year, a fun explosion of activity while everyone else in the world was stuck in line waiting for vinyl

pressing plants to actually press vinyl. Yeah, I could do that and break even to boot, with surplus funds to squander on cool diecut stickers and screenprinted posters and refrigerator magnets and who knows what other cool shit. It would be great! I could rule the world without even trying, just by doing a format nobody else wanted to touch because of hipsterism. Shit, before I had a single thing out I was already offered the first Lillingtons album (which I adore) simply for a bunch of *copies*. No shit!!!

This sounded swell until theory met practice. Teen Sensation Glasses *Fuzzy* was meant to be a secret bonus album out the same time as TSG *Focused* just to make a splash. But for technical reasons the two projects moved at different speeds and I pushed forward *Fuzzy* as the first release. Wow. A couple major miscalculations instantly were clear. First off, there was no doing 300 copies of anything that remotely resembled a Mutant Pop release for $700. Make that $1,000 or $1,100 for 500 copies to get transparent silvery discs — which (I was told) had to be screenprinted onto replicated discs produced from a glass master rather than inkjet printed onto duplicated CD-Rs.

And no, there were neither 100 people in the United States willing to buy in on that format, nor 100 in Japan plus Europe. It was more like 30 in the US and 20 in Japan and 0 in Europe — that was the general situation. That math didn't work in the slightest; and if you multiplied that loss (plus the cost of the bonus extras I was promising) by the planned nine releases, MP would splatter in a financial debacle that would rival my 2008 catastrophe.

So I pumped the brakes hard, postponing the full-lengths and moving to the SRCDs for the relaunch rather than sticking to my original timetable of bringing the format back in 2022. I know how to make SRCD economics work for a small group, it was the answer.

Anyway, albums 1 and 2 were to be TSG, album 3 was to be 17 Years. (Those will soon happen.) Album 4 was going to be a CD edition of **The Radio Buzzkills: *Get Fired!*** — which, according to Discogs, had never been released on a physical format, only on digital. So I pitched the band, Zac was an old MP fan and was excited to do it and we put it into the queue.

Whoops. I then discovered that *Get Fired!* was already in print as a CD on Matt Bennett's outstanding OUTLOUD! Records, one of the best pop-punk labels going. Discogs: you have failed me... Wellllll, *fuck!!!* I tucked my tail between my legs and belatedly got Matt's okay to pull that album and take it to MP for what I then believed would be a release shortly forthcoming.

Well, I've already told my economics story of woe and how I slammed on the brakes hard as soon as I discovered that I was about to go Thelma and Louise into a canyon... *Get Fired!* was one of the projects affected by my decision to delay rather than perish. I got the SRCD series successfully relaunched and financial destruction was thereby averted — but what was I to do with that album I had already committed to release?

Then it hit me: why not go "minus tracks" with the *Get Fired!* album, selecting the best of the best and putting those hits into a fresh sequence as an SRCD? The band would have something cool to sell at shows, I'd be able to put out the songs I loved (the fantastic tracks that moved me to pitch the band to do the album in the first place), there would be a top-flight new SRCD in the world, and I would not lose my ever-loving ass in the process... Win–Win! Thumbs up from the band. Yaay.

Since the band had already wasted half a year with their CD out of print, their song titled "Can't Wait Forever" had gained a new double meaning — not only a catchy title, but also a message from me to the band: The Radio Buzzkills Can't Wait Forever [for me to pull my head out and get their *Get Fired!* album back onto the street].

And so there you have it — the backstory.

Now what do we have here? The six best songs from the second RB album, a sixteen minute blast of catchiness, lyrical wit, and harmony. These are relationship songs for the most part, with a strong undercurrent revolving around a bitter breakup of romantic partners. Those of us who have been there will be able to relate.

The hit of the hit of hits is "I Wanna Go Down to the Basement," co-written by Dave Parasite (producer of the *Get Fired!* album) and Zac Buzzkill. What a song! But that particular tune is just the peak, all six tracks on this release are terrific and mesh together pretty seamlessly as a program — upbeat at the start but giving way to disappointment, longing, ennui — not dissimilar from the serious parts of a Connie Dungs album in a way, if that makes any sense. Great stuff!

You'll be excited to learn that there is a new Radio Buzzkills album in the works on Pro Rawk Records, another of the top punk labels doing their thing today. Get ready for that.

Anyway, all four SRCDs above feature posh glossy cover inserts, a lyrics insert sheet on nice paper, a durable vintage thinline jewelbox made in 2005 (before quality went to shit), and a double-sided glossy insert card. And yeah, they are cheap enough to collect — just $5 a throw and if you buy four SRCDs, the fifth selection is free. Postage is just $3 and you get extra stuff.

Just in case you already own all the in-print Mutant Pop SRCDs and need help finding a free fifth selection, here's a little list of stuff you can tag on as that extra choice:

- Pack of 100x the little resealable bags for 5.2 mm jewelboxes.
- Ben Grim *Muk* CDEP
- Burbs *There's a High Price for Livin' Nice* CDEP
- Dateless *Take Notes* CDEP
- Epoxies *Need More Time* CDEP (Dirtnap Records!)
- FabHabs *The Fabulous Habs* CDEP
- Jimmies *Two New Ones, Three Unreleased* CDEP
- Retreads *Uranus is Mine* CDEP
- Sheckies *Go On a Diet* CDEP
- Zoinks! *Panorama* CDEP

Hell, if you want to buy any or all of the above for $4 each at the same time, go for it! Thank you again!

# HOW TO RUN AWAY FROM A RECORD LABEL

*How to Ru(i)n a Record Label: The Story of Lookout Records*
by Larry Livermore
Don Giovanni Records, 2015; paper, 282+xvii pp.

Reviewed by T. Chandler.

Lookout co-founder David Hayes of Very Small Records takes aim at the "tye-dyed hippie" in this Feb. 1991 *MRR* ad.

I dutifully bought a copy of Lookout Records co-founder Larry Livermore's memoir *How to Ru(i)n a Record Label* shortly after it appeared in November 2015. I was engaged in a writing project at the time so I didn't have more than a few minutes to spend on it. I skimmed for any dirt that LL might have dished regarding my nemesis, Professional Musician Ben Weasel, and the scene-disrupting economic meltdown of the mighty Lookout Records before filing Larry's tome among the thousands (!!!) of others filling the basement of my shoe store — where it remains, somewhere, to this day.

With my return to Mutant Pop labeldom in 2021, my interest in *Selected Memories of a Berkeley Scenester* was piqued anew. With copy 1 misplaced in the rubble, more money was sent out the door for a specimen of the third printing of Larry's story of commitment, luck, and woe. With my attention shifted from the history of American radicalism to Punk Rock™, my second engagement with Livermore's tale proved utterly fascinating. It took me just three bedtimes to burn through the book cover-to-cover, capped by a 2:00 AM marathon.

Yeah, if you're a fan of pop-punk and you don't have it already, you need this book. The fact that you're receiving a Mutant Pop catalog indicates that this probably means *you* need this book. But when you read it be sure to grab yourself a shaker of salt and a pitcher of water to chase it.

**LARRY HAYES AND DAVID HAYES**

Lookout Records began as a partnership between Larry Hayes (punk name: Larry Livermore), a former hippie living virtually off the grid in the heart of the Mendocino County ganja belt, and David Hayes, a young Bay Area punk scenester of eclectic musical taste. Same last name, no relation. According to LL's testimony, the youthful Hayes first got in touch in 1986 as a customer when LL's sloppy thrash-folk-stuff band, The Lookouts, advertised their first demo tape for sale. Hayes wound up putting a couple tracks from *Lookout! It's the Lookouts!* on a compilation cassette tape he was as-

sembling, *Bay Mud,* and a pen-pal relationship ensued.

The next year, 1987, Livermore decided it was time to follow up the debut Lookouts cassette with a LP, *One Planet One People,* and he plunked the name Lookout Records on the label to give the self-release an air of legitimacy. Bicycle lover David Hayes was at the same time ready to jump to the world of vinyl, planning a release of a more or less forgettable East Bay metally punk band called Corrupted Morals on his own new label, Sprocket Records. Livermore wanted to expand to other bands, putting out 7" EPs by local heroes Isocracy and Operation Ivy, but knew he was in over his head. "I was good at big talk and crazy ideas, but [David] knew how to make things actually happen," LL recalls (p. 10). LL somehow convinced David to join forces rather than start his own label, and to add his planned Corrupted Morals record to the two that he had already planned, plus another by local band Crimpshrine. And so the real Lookout Records was born in the last days of 1987, with these first four releases hitting the street in January 1988.

> "I tell stories, to myself, mostly, and to others when they will listen, and realize afterward that no, that is not how it happened at all, it couldn't have happened that way because I hadn't even yet met so-and-so then, or I was living in an entirely different state then, or I couldn't have possibly been old enough to go there that year. But I also realize it must have happened, that I have been living my entire life for years as if it had happened, even advising others to live their lives as if it had happened, and how could anything be more real than that?
>
> If we believe something passionately enough, does it become true?"
>
> —Larry Livermore
> *Punk Planet* #8
> (July/Aug. 1995)

**MYTH DISPOSAL: LOOKOUT RECORDS, 1987–89**

I was living in Seattle during the 1988–89 academic year, attending grad school at the University of Washington. This was, rock historians will recall, Ground Zero of the Grunge movement — the home of Sub Pop Records and their stable of hippy dippy distortion pedal abusers. I heard that stuff on campus radio in real time. It did not move me. I did not attend a single show in that year, nor do I today retrospectively feel that my abstention caused me to miss out on anything of the slightest importance. I was, however, a regular in a couple record shops, and that experience was important. I was duly impressed by the series nature of the Sub Pop 7" record sleeves — an idea which I loved so much that I filched it for Mutant Pop in 1995. (The label name was *not* Sub Pop inspired, I hasten to add, it was my Gang of Four fandom.) I also heard the Pixies for the first time on UW's FM radio station, an event that struck me as the real bellweather of a coming punk rock explosion than anything actually happening in Seattle. The point is that the enormous movement around sloppy, dirty, distorted barroom hard rock didn't get my punk detector pinging. Nor did the small stack of obscure skronky records with photocopied sleeves from East Bay, California leave the smallest mark on either me or my world.

But if you have ever been exposed to the cant of Livermore, you have no doubt heard how the amazing, supersensational East Bay scene of the late 1980s was the actual epicenter of the 1990s punk rock revolution in the United States, thanks to a bunch of bright-eyed children out to make their own fun as Lookout cheered them on, enabling their activity with cleverly chosen and deftly promoted releases.

Let's review the complete list of Lookout Records releases for the years 1988 and 1989, shall we?

- The Lookouts LP *(LL's self-release before the label)*
- Corrupted Morals *Chet* EP
- Operation Ivy *Hectic* EP
- Crimpshrine *Sleep, What's That?* EP
- Isocracy *Bedtime for Isocracy* EP
- Stikky *Where's My Lunchpail?* LP
- Plaid Retina self-titled EP
- Sewer Trout *Songs About Drinking* EP
- Yeastie Girlz *Ovary Action* EP
- Operation Ivy *Energy* LP
- *The Thing That Ate Floyd* comp LPx2
- Neurosis *Aberration* EP
- Surrogate Brains *Surrogate Serenades* EP
- Eyeball *Prosthetic Head* EP
- Crimpshrine *Quit Talkin' Clyde* EP
- Kamala and the Karnivores *Girl Band* EP
- Green Day *1,000 Hours* EP
- Crimpshrine *Sleep, What's That?* EP
- The Lookouts *Spy Rock Road* LP
- Corrupted Morals *Cheese-It* LP
- Plaid Retina *Pinkeye* LP

Add 'em together and divide by 21 to average them out. The quotient is not fluffy bunny pop-punk. Ya got an Op Ivy 7-inch and a Green Day 7-inch and otherwise it is all over the map. So let's just dispense with the notion that there was some sort of huge national youth cuddle-punk revolution emerging in Berkeleyland in 1987–89 for which Lookout Records was the instigator and flagbearer. That notion is complete buncombe.

There *was* an active scene in the Bay Area, however. This was thanks almost entirely to the presence and largesse of *Maximumrocknroll,* the journal of record of American punk rock music. A new performance space was established in Oakland's industrial district, the Gilman Street Project. This was the brainchild of a circle of volunteers at *MRR,* with $40,000 in seed money funneled to the project from the magazine's operating surplus. In addition, publisher Tim Yohannan put his personal finances on the line when he provided his signature on the building lease and insurance documents for the space at 924 Gilman Street (*MRR#63*).

They say of baseball diamonds in the middle of cornfields, "If you build it, they will come." The same holds true for well-financed punk venues in old warehouses. There were bands that emerged to play in the cool new space, predictably. One group in particular, Operation Ivy, had the style and chops to blow the lid off the popcorn popper. *Gilman* was the scene. Lookout was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time to chronicle the bands of the area — and later to cash in.

Lookout was an eclectic local label, not a sound-driven label. Lookout did not invent pop-punk; pop-punk bands were incidentally one segment of the Lookout corpus. Allow me state the matter more boldly: ultimately there was no qualitative difference between Lookout Records for the Berkeley/Oakland scene in 1988-89 and Tiger Epoxy Records for Corvallis, Oregon in 1991-92.

Who? What?

Yeah, my point exactly.

The difference between the one memorable and other forgotten scene label is this: Lookout in the East Bay had the critical mass of population size, proximity to the national punk beacon, *MRR,* and connections making possible their fortuitous addition by honest distributor Mordam Records (itself a direct offshoot of *MRR)* at a remarkably early juncture. Lookout was *lucky* — the logical local label to handle the first releases of a couple seminal bands.

Tiger Epoxy Records and Lookout both began as hobby labels, the former run by one committed person, the latter by two. Both operations were initially founded without commercial motivation or intent.

**LARRY AND DAVID SPLIT**

At least it *seems* that Lookout at its foundation was established without commercial intent. Your mileage may vary. It did not take long for delusions of grandeur to manifest, or for Larry and David to split over the question of commercialization.

David Hayes may be a man of highly idiosyncratic musical taste, but his main concern has always been with putting out stuff for bands he likes personally. His grand objective was always limited to somehow surviving financially to pay for the next release. Disgusted with the direction of Lookout and fed up to the gills with Larry Livermore, David pulled up stakes and left the label on January 1, 1990, effectively gifting Livermore a franchise that would shortly be worth millions of dollars. He retained, he grimly remarked in one memorable email to me during the late 1990s, a mouthful of bad teeth.

Hear now, by way of contrast, the retrospective words of LL:

> Selling records solely at shows and through the mail *would only take us so far,* though. *To reach a larger audience,* we needed to get them in stores.... To make our records available outside Berkeley and San Francisco, however, we'd have to deal with distributors. (p. 29, emphasis added)

Do we notice commercial aspirations?

It must be mentioned that despite the melodramatic discussion of the big bad world of music commerce in Larry's book, Lookout didn't even have to "deal with distributors" for even half of one year. According to contemporary ads placed by the label, the Lookouts and Stikky LPs and the first group of 7" records were picked up by large distributor Caroline as well as small distributors Toxic Shock, Raunch, and Kaleidoscope (a list which differs slightly from that provided by LL in the book) — but this relationship was fleeting. Lookout was soon selected for exclusive distribution by Ruth Schwartz's Mordam Records, with the first Lookout ad plugging the Mordam connection running in *MRR*#61 (June 1988). Bear in mind that this *MRR* issue had an ad deadline of May 1 — a mere four months after the January launch of the label!

In this memoir Larry professes (or feigns?) confusion as to whether it was the divine intervention of *MRR's* charismatic publisher Tim Yohannan or the massive commercial success of the Operation Ivy album that caused *MRR* founding co-editor and Mordam chief Ruth Schwartz to reconsider her initial rejection and add Lookout to the "Mordam group." (p. 39) There is no such mystery, however, since the Op Ivy LP *would not even be released until weeks after the Mordam decision*. Nor was the album initially an insanely popular blockbuster, with its sales managing to hit the comparatively modest 2,000 copy mark by the end of 1989 (p. 215), the time at which David Hayes walked away.

> "I've been having one of my periodic identity crises, this one complicated by the fact that the identity stressing me doesn't even exist. I refer to Lawrence Livermore, of course...
>
> When I created him I was at a low point in my life... It was obviously time for something new, but because I felt so worthless myself, I didn't see how I could do anything on my own. So I invented this other guy. He was more self-confident than me, a know-it-all, in fact, and I sent him out to make friends for me.
>
> He only existed on paper, of course, and then later on records and tapes, and as a voice on the radio. The way I figured, he would get people's attention, but once they figured I was the brains behind him, they'd fall in love with me. But I was wrong. I became his invisible sidekick.... He got more and more popular and I got more and more alone."
>
> —Larry Livermore
> *Maximumrocknroll* #96
> (May 1991)

As an aside, note that the Mordam operation was built upon exclusive distribution agreements with Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles records and with *MRR* itself — both of which generated products that were monthly essentials for every punk-oriented record shop in America and around the world. Mordam did not sell to every store directly, but rather transshipped their exclusive goods to many other record distributors, thereby gaining placement of its wares in the massive corporate chain stores that dominated music retailing in this era.

Livermore and Hayes were both well-known volunteers at MRR, as had been Mordam chief Ruth Schwartz. The label dudes and the distro boss were not strangers. It was not an accident that Schwartz picked up their label in its infancy. As surely as AT and *MRR* made Mordam, and they did, Mordam made Lookout. The well-connected Bay Area label was once again fortuitously in the right place at the right time.

**THE EARLY GREEN DAY YEARS, 1990–91**

Then in 1990 came Green Day, a band which Larry indicates he first run across in 1988, when Billie Joe Armstrong was a "wide-eyed" boy of 16. Livermore correctly declares that he never had "'discovered' Green Day any more than Columbus had discovered America" (p. 187), but this hoary myth nevertheless remains in circulation today. In fact, as Larry recounts in a previous memoir, his true claim to fame is for having discovered the third — and current — Green Day drummer at age 12. ("How I Became A Capitalist," *Lookout* #39, Summer 1994) Be that as it may, Green Day, the youthful band by which all others will forever be judged, recorded their debut full-length for Livermore's Lookout, *39/Smooth*, in just two days at a total cost of $675 (!!!). (p. 86) This expenditure on studio time would prove lucrative. While the ongoing — and growing — popularity of the Operation Ivy LP with punk kids would provide the first "franchise" release for Lookout Records, it would be Green Day which would over the next five years put the label into another tax bracket. Already at the time of its release on April 13, 1990, there were 400 kids clamoring at  to purchase an LP from the initial pressing of 5,000.

The very next month Larry Livermore decided to remove from the marijuana-ensconced hills around Laytonville, California to Berkeley. (p. 93) Did he do so to go to work full time on his promising young label? No, he did not. Livermore instead promptly enrolled at UC Berkeley, a leisure-time activity which absorbed, he says, half his available hours. Actual day-to-day operations of Lookout — the answering of correspondence, stuffing of records into sleeves, building ads, and picking-and-packing of mailorder — was handled by a pair of dedicated college kids, Patrick Hynes and Chris Appelgren, minimum wage-ish employees.  There was work to be done — so LL moved to town and hired it out.

During the early 1990s there was a sea change in the way that music was consumed, with cassettes and LPs supplanted by the new compact disc format — a sonically-superior format that inspired millions of people to dump the analog gunk from their collections and to repurchase their favorite titles on digital. By the middle of 1991, Livermore recalls, powered by the long margins and strong sales of the new CD format, Lookout found itself awash in money.

It was time to give Pat and Chris a raise, and thought they deserved far more than the $5 an hour they'd been getting, I couldn't be sure our current string of luck would last.

So instead of cash, I offered them profit shares: they'd each get 5% ownership of the company for every year they worked there, up to a maximum of five years. At that point the two of them would own

CORPORATE SHIT STILL STINKS...
SO WHY DO OTHER SO-CALLED PUNK & INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS SELL THEIR SHIT AT SUCH HIGH PRICES?
COMPARE... | LP | CASS | CD
LOOKOUT | 6 | 6 | 8
NEMESIS | 9 | 9 | 12
TAANG | 8 | 8 | 12
SST | 7.50 | 7.50 | 12
VERY SMALL | 6 | 6 | —
CRUZ | 7.50 | 7.50 | 12
DISCHORD | 6 | 6 | 8
RAVE | 7 | 7 | 11
this is not a criticism of any other label, it is merely an informative comparison.
in addition to this fun graph-thingy, we also got new t-shirts too
green day
3 colors, white shirt
lookout rec's
blk, grey shirt
$hirts 9bux/USA • 10bux/CanMexSea 11bux/AirEuro • 12bux/AirAsia
more new ! shirts soon
po box 11374 berkeley CA 94701
LOOKOUT RECORDS
.... we'd like to know.

This Lookout ad from November 1991 in *MRR#102* takes on the LP and CD prices of a couple of the ickier indy labels. Within 10 years, despite falling production costs, Lookout's *wholesale* CD price to stores would crack the $8 mark.

half the company — 49% to be precise — while I would control the rest. (pp. 108–109)

This decision to split ownership, disingenuously explained elsewhere by LL as a manifestation of idealistic commitment to worker ownership, would ultimately prove to have grave consequences for Lookout Records, for Mordam, and for American punk rock. But that is a story for another day, a part of the Lookout story to which Livermore only alludes. But do take this away: when the company's financial fortunes improved, when its income swelled enough to make professional operations possible, instead of committing to pay his employees a living wage and hiring to fill need, Larry Livermore made the decision to grant his two long-term employees minority ownership in lieu of salary.

Green Day turned in a second album to Lookout in the fall of 1991, *Kerplunk,* with its first pressing of 10,000 copies sold out by Mordam in a single day. The chains were on board! Hurrah! Sales of the release quickly rocketed past the 20,000 mark; then past 30,000. (p. 123)

Despite the sudden cash infusion, little changed at Lookout Central. Larry finished his class work in December and promptly went on a three week vacation. He returned, he grouses, to an office and living quarters that "resembled a post-apocalyptic day care center," with the overmatched Hynes and Appelgren failing to keep up with the manufacturing of sold out titles during the critical Christmas rush. (p. 129) Though the level of competence and professionalism would improve somewhat in 1992, LL indicates, he nevertheless managed to take time off for another celebratory vacation, this time to the UK and continental Europe, hitting the road on tour with MTX as far east as Poland. Licensing of Lookout's by now lucrative catalog to an experienced European label was mishandled by him, LL notes, with the result that import-only copies Green Day, Screeching Weasel, and Queers albums would remain scarce and costly in later years (p. 130), affecting the income streams of such "professional" bands.

Vacations are swell, I shut down my own hobby label for a month in the summer several times, but the propensity of Livermore to tour the United States as a musician and to race around the globe on business trips was not lost on contemporary critics. Livermore was accused of "traipsing off to England all the time" and effectively playing the roll of "absentee owner." (Tim Yohannan in *Punk Planet* #7, May/June 1995) Actual label operations were frequently left to Hynes, Appelgren, and new employee Erika Grove.

**THE SCREECHING WEASEL YEARS, 1992–93**

Popular *Maximumrocknroll* columnist Ben Weasel seems to have had his eye on jointing the roster of the fast-growing Lookout Records from the first years of the 1990s. Despite Ben's having broken up Screeching Weasel late in 1989, Larry remembers having received nearly daily calls from Chicago, even though "it wasn't as if Ben and I had any real business to transact... He mostly wanted to vent about what he saw about what he saw as the pointlessness of pursuing a career as a musician." (p. 107) LL says that Ben sought to move past "that Weasel bullshit" with a new project with SW co-founder John "Jughead" Pierson called The Gore Gore Girls, but that he had repeatedly refused to sign him — thereby eventually convincing Weasel to re-form the older, more-marketable band. Ben followed this advice, asked Livermore to produce the album, and SW was signed to the label, ushering in a new phase of Lookout's history.

Screeching Weasel's first Lookout release, *My Brain Hurts,* was accompanied by a reissue of the band's second album, *Boogada Boogada Boogada,* first released in 1989 on Chicago's Roadkill Records. The new album sold better than Livermore's expectations — but those sales were more than doubled by orders for the reissued *Boogada* album, now available on CD for the first time. SW would follow this with *Wiggle,* an album which for the first time used Mass Giorgini's Sonic Iguana studio, which would emerge as Weasel-period Lookout's house of hits. It was Ben Weasel, not Larry Livermore, who was responsible for the addition of The Queers and The Vindictives to the Lookout roster, which together with releases by Bay Area favorites the Mr. T Experience and the deathless Operation Ivy album would establish the so-called "Lookout sound."

Tuneful midtempo, post-Ramones pop-punk was popular: "We'd reached a point where we could count on selling a few thousand copies of anything we released simply because it said 'Lookout' on the cover," Livermore notes. The world was his oyster — the label was in a position to develop new pop-punk bands or take little-known groups of merit to the next level.

But did they?

What were Larry Livermore's proud contributions during the High Period of Lookout Records? He added long-haired Richmond, Virginia stompers Avail (pp. 145–146), "ambitious musician" Jon Ginoli's flaccid novelty band, Pansy Division (p. 147), and a failed effort to "break through to the same audience Nirvana had" with Humboldt County's Nuisance. (pp. 147–8) He was self-critically aghast at his drunken mishandling a prospective retrospective of political hardcore band Born Against. (pp. 187–8) Yeesh.

Despite proudly and incessantly touting his own label's astounding financial good fortune, and despite his own years of having played footsies with one particular lucre-focused Chicago careerist, Livermore spends two pages of his book shamefully slagging off on Lookout band Tilt for having been a little more "professional" and "business-like" than "we were used to dealing with." They felt, in short, "in some vague and undefinable way 'un-Lookout.'" (p. 166) Their actual crime? Jumping to Fat Wreck Chords for their second album, it would seem!

By 1993 Lookout was already a $1 million a year business. (p. 175) Larry indicates that, inexplicably, the rapidly-grow-

ing company still did not make use of a professional accountant (pp. 175–176), a damning admission of executive incompetence. Despite the chaos in this period of explosive growth, Livermore still found time to escape from the understaffed operation on an excursion to the UK during the first months of 1994. (p. 177)

**PUNK BREAKS BIG, 1994–96**

With the popularity of punk rock continuing its upward trajectory throughout 1993, Billie Joe, Mike, and Tre decided to make a grab for the brass ring. They signed a contract with a mainstream business management team, the first step to a deal with the Reprise Records division of Warner Brothers. The major label spent time and money crafting the band's third album, with Rob Cavallo ably handling the production chore. On February 1, 1994, Green Day's pop-punk masterpiece, *Dookie,* was released by Reprise to critical acclaim, with a video for "Longview" garnering heavy airplay on eMpTyV. Interest in the band's back catalog mushroomed. With Lookout making CDs for around a buck a copy and collecting about $6 each from Mordam after their commission, there were massive profits generated. Despite Lookout's generous 60% band : 40% label split of net proceeds, the math remained attractive for the label, with Lookout clearing approximately $2 per unit on every Green Day CD that Mordam sold. And they sold *a lot* of CDs! (Moreover, that margin increased over time, with Lookout twice boosting the distributor price charged to Mordam for its wares over the course of the decade.)

Then the fates further intervened. On April 8, 1994, the shotgun-mangled corpse of Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, soiled posterboy of "alternative rock," was discovered at his home in Seattle. A gargantuan vaccum at the top of the food pyramid was left to be filled by the mainstream music industry. On the heels of their outstanding major label debut, Billie Joe Armstrong and Green Day was pumped with helium and thrust into the void.

Green Day sales went through the roof. Livermore states that in one quarter in 1995 he wrote $1.2 million dollars in royalty checks to Billie Joe & Co. — a figure which indicates an $800,000 quarterly profit for Lookout from its Green Day sales alone. In addition, powered by the massive commercial success of Rancid on Epitaph Records, Lookout's Op Ivy album continued to sell like gangbusters, with Mordam shipping up 2,000 copies a week. (p. 215) The money rolled in. The year would be a high-water mark for Lookout, with total sales topping $10 million. The year 1996, while not quite as gilded as the previous annum, would still generate plenty of gold for Lookout's coffers, with total sales hitting $6 million. (p. 235)

This was the moment of greatest possibility. Lookout had an established "sound" in the minds of the record-buying public, it had a loyal fan base, it had "star" acts of national renown, it had an embarrassingly healthy revenue stream. Any pop-punk band in the country would have been proud to have joined its roster. Lookout could have developed an enduring community built around *a sound* and established a permanent place for itself in the American music industry akin to what has subsequently been achieved by its money-lovin' Bay Area friendly rival, Fat Wreck Chords.

Yet, here we are at the end of Larry Livermore's "Story of Lookout Records." He was bored. He was fundamentally incapable of handling basic executive operations of even a small record label, let alone the midsized multi-milliion dollar operation that Lookout had become. He didn't take charge and delegate, he ran away.

Chris Appelgren hired his fiancé Molly Neuman, a founding member of Team Riot Grrrl and the Olympia Kool Kids Klub. She hired her friends. None of them understood pop-punk. It is highly doubtful that most of them even *liked* pop-punk.

Livermore hid in his office, fielding a steady stream of calls from the erratic Ben Weasel, who was eager to cash in on the pop-punk bubble while there was cash to be made. The label floundered, opening a ill-considered cash-draining record store, losing focus, hiring employees without purpose, and spiraling out of control.

> Obviously we were spending way too much money.
>
> But on what? There was no single expenditure I could point to, but a host of costly and inefficient practices had become baked into the system.
>
> Massive promo campaigns, for example, sometimes saw us mailing out more free copies of a release than we'd end up selling. The ridiculously high-priced ads we place in mainstream magazines looked like a blatant form of payola, aimed at guaranteeing good reviews and coverage. It made for pleasant reading but accomplished little else.
>
> Then there were the industry conferences like CMJ in New York, South by Southwest in Texas, or Midem in France. I always thought of them as pointless circle jerks, but Chris and Molly loved them. Not content with attending themselves, they began flying bands out to play Lookout showcases. (p. 236)

The demands of Ben Weasel and his friend Joey Vindictive wore on Livermore, it seems clear. Weasel jumped to Fat Wreck for his *Bark Like a Dog* album and then began to obsess on the fact that Fat — with its higher wholesale prices — paid him more money per unit than did Lookout. He sought a comparable payout from Lookout, a demand which resulted in the first of two label-wide price hikes. (p. 241–2) He wrote Lookout a lengthy, handwritten letter on a yellow legal pad accusing the company of breach of contract, of "systematically shorting him on royalties for the entire time we'd worked together," Livermore indicates, and including a demand for payment of the shortfall. (p. 241)

Livermore and Weasel went to court over alleged breach of contract, with Livermore taking the matter to court in California before Weasel could do the same in Illinois. (p. 243)

The move to the courts caused a major shitstorm in the punk rock world, with Lookout villified by Tim Yohannan and *Maximumrocknroll*. This, too, left its mark:

> I felt completely isolated and alone. Regardless of how they might feel personally, people didn't want to be seen taking sides, especially if they were in other Lookout bands.
>
> Some let me know they had complete confidence in Lookout, but couldn't risk alienating Ben by publicly contradicting his story. Most tried to avoid the topic altogether. (p. 148)

This feeling of isolation pushed the embattled Livermore towards the door. His empowerment of Chris Appelgren as a minority owner had led to the hiring of Molly Neuman and to a change of the entire culture of Lookout Records. Now he was in a corner when Appelgren went full Neville Chamberlain in attempting to appease Ben Weasel.

> I'd been thinking of leaving Lookout as far back as 1994. (!!!) I liked building and creating things. I didn't like sitting at a desk, I didn't like being "the boss," and I hated not having enough time for my own music and writing.
>
> Yet since I was going to be stuck there at least until the Ben Weasel problem was resolved, I thought I might as well draw up some plans for getting the label back on track once the court business was over.
>
> Molly would have to go. She wasn't a bad person or a bad employee, but she wasn't a good fit for Lookout. I'd kind of known that from the start, but her relationship with Chris, combined with the major role she'd come to play in the label, had made me hesitant to do anything about it.
>
> Chris could stay — would have to stay. Like Patrick, he was a full partner now.... But he wasn't management material. He had too strong a need to be liked, and was too eager for everyone to be happy. (pp. 249–250)

Chris issued an ultimatum: drop the Weasel lawsuit or he would quit. Livermore contends he thought long and hard over the matter, a clean way to simultaneously force out both Appelgren and his wife Neuman (p. 251) — although, it goes without saying, there would have been a financial price to pay associated with such a decision. But both he and Patrick Hynes were by now burned out, Livermore asserts, and in the middle of a sleepless night he typed up a short resignation email and hit Send. (p. 254)

**END OF ONE THING, START OF ANOTHER**

There are heroes and villains in Livermore's book. Doctor Frank, good. Joe Queer, good. Ben Weasel, bad. Molly Neuman, bad. Fair enough, so far as that goes. But this is not a morality play, it is a tragedy that permanently affected the entire American punk rock scene, record distribution in America, and the pop-punk community. And the cause of the grim outcome — the death of Mordam Records, the death of Lookout Records — was avoidable even accepting the villainy of careerists or hipster bureaucrats as axiomatic. The real problem was Larry Livermore. As the old saying goes, he was born on third base and thought he hit a triple. He was at the right place at the right time to document the vital scene that sprang up around *MRR's* Gilman project. He was in the right place at the right time when his little label got picked up by the *MRR*-inspired Mordam Records for exclusive distribution. He was in the right place at the right time when Green Day jumped to a major label and was anointed The Next Big Thing. He was in the right place at the right time when the new compact disc format took over the world, generating super-profits for labels.

But he proved fundamentally unsuited for the task, convinced that the life of a troubadour and international traveler and whimsical band-picker somehow was sufficient to accomplish the hard work of building a viable record company from the ground up. He was absentee in practice when his band toured. He was absentee in a figurative sense even when present, leaving fundamental decisions about company strategy and hiring practice to others. He failed to make the transition from Lookout Phase-I (regional scene label) to Lookout Phase-II (focused sonic label) a reality. He had no core fandom of pop-punk — chasing an eclectic mix of bands from Avail to Born Against, when focus would have consolidated Lookout's position in the music world. What followed was departure and a drift to Lookout Phase-III (hipster Olympia-sound label).

Larry is not a bad person. I like him even if he can be a bit of a troll on the internet. But he did not possess the fundamental confidence, the love for a musical sound, and the basic business competence called for by the extraordinary situation in which he found himself.

I also don't think Chris Appelgren is a bad person. I was around to help him if he got serious about making Lookout the best pop-punk label it could be and there were tons of others who would have done likewise. My recollection is that our correspondence ended with a message something like, "you worry about your label and I'll worry about mine" — a phrase which a quick check of Google Translate indicates means "fuck off" in English.

He put his confidence in Ben Weasel and Panic Button Records. Then he was sold Panic Button Records by Ben Weasel.

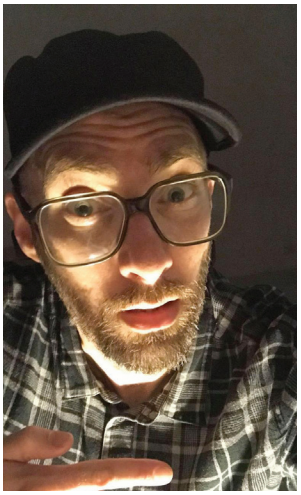
We all saw how that worked out.

There were a lot of people hurt because of it.

Larry Livermore's second memoir, *How to Ru(i)n a Record Label: The Story of Lookout Records,* is well worth owning. The book is copiously illustrated and entertainingly written. As is the case with all memoirs, one must "consider the source" — it is an unfootnoted, undocumented, free-form set of recollections, not a work of academic history. To that end the book should have an index and does not— a minor party foul in the big scheme of things. It is a credit to the publisher, Don Giovanni Records.

# TOP RELEASES OF 2021

I asked a few of my pop-punk pals for their Top Five lists and the reason each one rules in 25 words or less. (They couldn't list their own stuff either.)



## STEFAN TIJS

(Stardumb Records boss)

**1. Dinosaur Jr.:**
***Sweep It Into Space* LP**
I'm a big fanboy loving everything Dinosaur, but this truly IS great again. Extra shout-out to Lou for dropping a killer 2021 solo album, too.

**2. Daniel Romano's Outfit:**
***Cobra Poems* LP**
I saw Jamie of Pale Lips describe this as what should be everyone's favorite record of the year. She's not far off in my case.

**3. Pip Blom: *Welcome Break* LP**
Great Dutch indie pop band. Could/should be on Matador, although I suppose the British Heavenly label isn't a bad label to be on either.

**4. Sweet Nobody: *We're Trying Our Best* LP**
More indie pop with female vocals. I think I found out about this band through Geoff Palmer. Thanks for recommending, my friend!

**5. Bad Secret: *Vinyl-ONE* 7" EP**
A 4-song EP, but still beating lots of albums for me… This year saw lots of great pop-punk releases, but Beau Basement took the cake!

## JOSH RUTLEDGE

(Faster and Louder blogster)

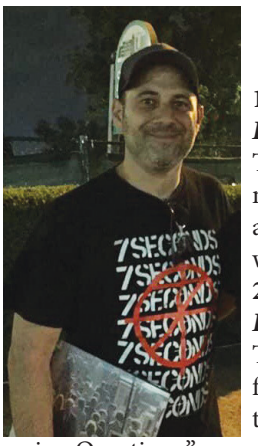
**5. The Randells: *Kicks* LP**
Bubblegum punk power-pop extraordinaire from the south of Sweden. A Summer album for all seasons!

**4. The Real Sickies:**
***Love is for Lovers* LP**
The best thing to come out of Edmonton since Wayne Gretzky's mullet.

**3. Neon Bone:**
**"I Wanted You to Know" 7"**
This band is the gold standard for modern-day pop-punk.

**2. Goin' Places: *Saves The World* LP**
Third album from these Staten Island legends demonstrates how pop-punk can "grow up" and still sound classic. Harmonies and melodies all day!

**1. Geoff Palmer: *Charts and Graphs* LP**
Ten insanely catchy tracks of poppy punk (and much more) from one of our finest present-day songwriters. "Many More Drugs" is an instant classic!



## JASON BAYGOOD

(PunkNews reviewer)

**1. Capgun Heroes:**
***Last Call for Adderal* LP**
This Chicago area band debut is a perfect mix of classic '90s pop-punk with Midwest angst. Contents include memorable songs with much melody.

**2. Dan Vapid and the Cheats:**
***Escape Velocity* LP**
The band's fourth effort is a concept album full of emotion. Dan Vapid has become a true singer-songwriter. Check out "Burning Questions."

**3. The Shivvies: self-titled LP**
This debut album by this supergroup from the Netherlands is chock full of pop-punk, new wave, and 1980s Ramones. "Creepy Vibes" is my jam.

**4. VonErichs: *First Blood Match* LP/CD**
Mysterious new band unleases a poweful debut of catchy and memorable pop-punk about all your favorite baby faces and heels of the squared circle.

**5. Naked Raygun: *Over the Overlords* LP**
Chicago's masters return with first proper full-length in over 30 years, proving to still be the masters of post-punk with a catchy chorus.

## ATHENA ATHENS

(Little Lost Girl Media honcho)

**1. The Shivvies: self-titled LP**
This gives me everything I wish I could get if the Ramones were still alive. Every song is great — can't wait to see what's next!

**2. Capgun Heroes:**
***Last Call for Adderal* LP**
All thriller, no filler for fans of Riverdales, Lillingtons, and TBR. Keeping it real in Chicago. A must-have. And yes, I'm that girl! Lol.

**3. Covert Flops: *Mission Implausible* LP**
"Hell yeah, I can sing along" Ramones-style rocknroll that's impossible not to love. Queers and Jasons influences an amazing originals. They kill it.

**4. Teenage Bottlerocket: *Sick Sesh* CD**
Still waiting for wax. An amazing album once again from the most consistent band in my favorite genre. They never go out of style!

**5. DeeCracks: Serious Issues LP**
They don't like the term Ramonescore, so it's "Sing-along 1-2-3-4 rocknroll!" I bought three copies — yeah, it's a favorite. DeeCRACKS, get outtta my head!

## KAZU ONIGIRI

(Waterslide Records chief)

**1. Bobby Ramone:**
***Rocket to Kingston* LP**

Bob Marley met the Ramones at CBGBs in the late '70s and they decided to make a record together. Yes, this is it!

**2. The Reflectors: *Faster Action***

This Californian '70s-style power pop is a winner! If you love pop melody, then they're gonna blow your mind away.

**3. Teen Sensation Glasses:**
***Fuzzy* CD**

Finally, mighty Timbo is back! You can't imagine how I waited for this day coming. I didn't expect TSG today to be greater than ever!

**4. Tommy Ray! *Handful of Hits* LP**

The guy from The Cry! did a greater job than ever. Absolutely recreates The Cry! sound. He must be Stiv Bators today.

**5. Wild Sandals: *Sandale Grande* CD**

Hawaiians + Favorats = perfect bubblegum summer beach pop-punk. Perfect Beach Boys meets Ramones sound in 2021, bringing summer days even to a Russian winter.

## MARKUS PFLEGER

(Ramone To The Bone king)

**1. F.A.N.T.A. (Barcelona)**

¡Quiero ser un Ramone! Yes sir, me, too! F.A.N.T.A. is one of the greatest pop-punk bands from the deep heart of Tex.. uhm... Spain.

**2. Urban Idols (Chicago, IL)**

Urban Idols — Revisited. The lost tape from 2000 and I've found it. I didn't even know there were punks in Chicago. Anyhow, good for us!

**3. Whitmore (Salisbury, UK)**

Old guard ska punkers from the most famous island. They made it across the ocean for the soundtrack of the video game Flatout.

**4. Senior Discount (Providence, Rhode Island)**

Senior Discount, the award-winning punk rock band, were caught in Providence! That looks like a case for Judge Frank Caprio. Killer melodies!

**5. The 99ers (St. Paul, Minnesota)**

The 99ers made theiur own rules: Keep it short! Bang it out! No messing about! I'll also keep it short: Awesome pop-punk band!

# Rishikimi i muzikës shqiptare — 2021

Since this is the last issue of the MP Catalog in 2021, my Albanian friend Merkush Murat asked me to list the free releases he produced this year. For you, my friend, I shall. There were four titles put out by his Duroc Airlines dhe Muzike.

01 Holly and the Italians: *Forty Years Late* (demos) — October 2021
02 Gang of Four: *Demolition Zone* (demos) — November 2021
03 The Kung Fu Monkeys: *America's Favorite Band! Live Green Bay 1999* — December 2021
04 The Go-Go's: *Ready, Set, Go-Go's! Live Philadelphia Aug. 1981* — December 2021

# Timbo's Picks – Start Your Order Here!

I trust that most of you read the excellent interview granted by Mike Patton of Vista Blue, The Loblaws, Ralphie's Red Ryders, and The Robinsons in the last issue of this catalog. (Go back and read it if you skipped it, dumbbell.) As part of that Mike and I put together an impressive discography of his self-released CD-Rs. You will never find them even if you try... They are not in shops, not on eBay, not on Discogs, not in stores. Maybe if you make friends with somebody that was into the NOLA scene back in the day you can track down a few titles, but good luck to you.

Fear not! With impeccable timing comes this fresh release — two CD-Rs oozing with DIY spirit and packed with catchy, winsome pop-punk goodness. It's a new reissue of **The Robinsons: *There's No Apostrophe in Robinsons: Plural Not Possessive, 2000–2002.*** Whew! That's a mouthful.

The recordings are raw. If you want gloss, move along. But give this a listen and you'll quickly understand why I was so anxious to put out a 7-inch of the band on Mutant Pop in 2008 until I was so rudely interrupted by financial reality. And you'll understand as well why my pal Rami Wallenius of Killer Records in Finland actually *did* put out a Robinsons 7-inch! There's a breathtaking *earnestness* and *purity* here — they're trying to copy *nobody*. The songwriting is first-rate — which is no news to anyone acquainted with Mike's work with The Loblaws and Vista Blue. Two discs, rare release, 42 songs, cool DIY package — just **Eight bucks.**

## This is Tyler. Tyler is cool.

**Tyler is wearing a Mutant Pop t-shirt that was presold on Facebook earlier this month. You still have a chance to be cool, too, since there were a few extras made for the catalog folk. Jump fast though.**

**Remaining: 1 x M, 3 x L, 3 x XL** **$20 postpaid.**

## Arrrrgh! Time to catch up with the CD Pirate's CD3 onslaught...

Greybeard relocated to a new cove last month, so no new CD3 pirate editions of Mutant Pop 7-inchers. This makes a great opportunity for you to catch up on what you're missing! **Price is $4 each.** Quantities are limited so be sure to write first for confirmation.

MP-01 Underhand *Desire* - first sleeve
MP-01 Underhand *Desire* - second sleeve
MP-02 Round Nine self-titled
MP-03 Boris the Sprinkler *D&M* - first sleeve
MP-03 Boris the Sprinkler *D&M* - blue on black Mimi (1 only!)
MP-05 Automatics *All the Kids* - second sleeve
MP-06 Everready *County Transit System*
MP-07 Underhand *Under a Glass*
MP-13 Automatics *10 Golden Greats!*
MP-16 After School Special *Wrong*
MP-17 Automatics *Makin' Out*
MP-20 Automatics *10 More Golden Greats!* - regular sleeve
MP-20 Automatics *10 More Golden Greats!* - error sleeve
MP-24 Dillinger Four *Girlfriends and Gum* - second sleeve
MP-25 Automatics *Karaoke Party*
MP-26 Dirt Bike Annie *Choco-Berri Sugar Pops*
MP-27 Kung Fu Monkeys *Shindig!*
MP-33 Kung Fu Monkeys *Hi-Fi at Low Tide*
MP-34 Hissyfits *All Dolled Up* - spot pink sleeve
MP-34 Hissyfits *All Dolled Up* - spot red sleeve
MP-35 Chubbies *She Wanted More*
MP-44 Impulse International *Saturday Suzie* - regular sleeve
MP-44 Impulse International *Saturday Suzie* - obi sleeve
MP-701 Everready *Kalifornia*
MP-702 Jon Cougar Conc. Camp *Punk Explosion!* - oval bubble
MP-702 Jon Cougar Conc. Camp *Punk Explosion!* - square bub.

# Stuff for Sale

This is a partial list of poppy punk substances available. To order, drop me a quick line at MutantPop@aol.com to confirm availability. I will let you know a price and then you can either Paypal funds to my email address or send me a check.

## SEVEN INCH VINYL ($4 EACH)

| | |
|---|---|
| 17 Years | Please Stop That EP |
| Apers | split w/20 Belows |
| Capitalist Kids | split w/Hospital Job |
| Crumbs | split w/Ridicules |
| Dazes | split w/Wimpys (Greetings From Japan!) |
| Dopamines | split w/Till Planes |
| Favorats | Destination Outta Space |
| Favorats | The Beauty and The Beach |
| Gain | split w/Crush Story |
| Helgas | self-titled EP |
| Kepi Ghoulie | split EP w/Flav Giorgini |
| Kung Fu Monkeys | Coast to Coast EP |
| Lipstick Homicide | split w/Turkletons |
| Lizards | Sick of You EP |
| Lynyrd's Innards | Houston, We Have a Problem |
| McRackins | I'll Stick to Beer EP |
| McRackins | w/Prozacs |
| Mean Jeans | split w/Underground Railway to Candyland |
| Mugwumps | Slit Your Tire |
| Mushuganas | Dropout Girl EP |
| Pat Dull & His Media Whores | 1984 |
| Pettyfords | split EP w/Screwballs |
| Plow United | split w/Texas Criffer |
| Pool Party | Born Too Loose |
| Popsters | Two Minutes |
| Prozac, J | split w/Jeffrey Thunders & the Scabs |
| Prozacs | split w/Marko & the Bruisers |
| Prozacs | Odds N' Ends EP |
| Prozacs | split EP w/Guts |
| Rehabs | King of Heart |
| Rehabs | Motor City Weekend |
| Retarded | Gambling on Rock |
| Scared of Chaka | split w/Real Swinger |
| Screwballs | Nobody Says I Wanna Be a Screwball… |
| Sensibles | Bibi |
| Sensibles | Ice Cream Man |
| Servotron | Join the Evolution |
| Skinny Genes | Ugh |
| Spinoffs | Break Out! |
| Spinoffs | Stayin' Alive |
| Statues | Same Bodies, Same Faces EP |
| Steinways | Unoriginal Recipe EP |
| Teenage Boneheads | Rock'n'Roll Teen Idol |
| Tranzmitors | Bigger Houses, Broken Homes |
| Turturros | I'm Not EP |
| Turturros | split w/Los Activos |
| Urban Idols | Sick Day Breakdown |
| Varsity Weirdos | Close the Blinds |
| Varsity Weirdos | High School Teen Party |
| Veterans | Quartet |
| Zoinks! | Soap Factory EP |
| Zoinks! | split w/No Empathy |

$4

$4

## COMPACT DISCS ($8 EACH)

| | |
|---|---|
| After School Special | self-titled CD [DOUBLE] |
| Apers | The Wild and Savage Apers |
| Beatnik Termites | Bubblecore |
| Beatnik Termites | Sweatin' to the Termites |
| Chick Magnets | Girl Crazy |
| Chick Magnets | Low Budget Super Heroes |
| Crumbs | Dade County Trash |
| Darlington | Girltroversy |
| Epoxies | self-titled CD |
| Gain | ABCD&E (1992-1998) |
| Grimetime | I Think We Could Do Better |
| Groovie Ghoulies | Go! Stories |
| Groovie Ghoulies | Re-Animation Festival |
| Groovie Ghoulies | World Contact Day |
| Hallingtons | Hexed 1-2-3-4 |
| Holly and the Italians | The Right to Be Italian |
| Jagger Holly | DJ Free Europe |
| Joe Jitsu | Start It Up |
| Kepi Ghoulie & The Copyrights | Re-Animation Festival |
| Kobanes | False Accusation |
| Kobanes | Halfway to Sanity [Ramones] |
| Leghounds | Date Your Daughters |
| Lemonaids | Drop In, Wipe Out + Back to the Beach |
| Love Hearts | As If |
| Love Hearts | Melt My Heart |
| Lucy and the Rats | Got Lucky |
| Lucy and the Rats | self-titled CD |
| Mugwumps | Mutation in the Family |
| Parasite Diet | Braindead |
| Parasite Diet | Coast to Coast |
| Parasite Diet | self-titled CD |
| Parasites | It's Alive [RAMONES!] |
| Plus Ones | Oh Me of Little Faith |
| Pool Party | Number One |
| Popsters | All of You |
| Prozac, J | Here Is My Heart |
| Prozac, J & Bil McRackin | The New Adventures of Doubtfire |
| Prozacs | Playing the Chords We Love |
| Prozacs | split w/Johnie 3 |
| Putz | Clinically Inane |
| Putz | Hole in One |
| Putz | Knock It Off |
| Queers | A Day Late and a Dollar Short |
| Queers | Pleasant Screams |
| Queers | Weekend at Bernie's |
| Radio Buzzkills | Get Lost! |
| RocknRoll Television | Taking Back the Airwaves |
| Sex Dream | Candle on My Skin |
| Spinoffs | Straight Leather Jacket |
| Travoltas | Travoltas Party! |
| Various Artists | File Under: A Mutant Pop Tribute |
| Walker | Actually Being Lonely Isn't All That Bad |

$8

$8

***How to support Mutant Pop and keep it rolling: Buy something. (It's quite simple!)***

# Mutant Pop — LIST OF STUFF FOR SALE (order away!)

**Attention Deficit** *Adventures in Laissez-Faire...* CD **$8**
**Attention Deficit** *Gets Poked in the Eye* SRCD **$5**
**Automatics** *10 Golden Greats!* 7-inch **$4**
**Automatics** *10 More Golden Greats!* 7-inch **$4**
**Automatics** *Abridged* SRCD **$5**
**Automatics** *All the Kids Just Wanna Dance* 7-inch **$4**
**Automatics** *Karaoke Party* 7-inch **$4**
**Automatics** *Makin' Out* 7-inch **$4**
**Beautys** *A#1 Sex Shop Employee* 7-inch **$4**
**Beldons** *Fatal Road* SRCD **$5**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *New Wave Records* 7-inch **$4**
**Buglite** *Sorry to Disappoint You* 7-inch **$4**
**Carter Peace Mission** *Disco Stu Likes Disco Music* CD **$8**
**Catalogs** self-titled EP 7-inch **$4**
**Chubbies** *She Wanted More* 7-inch **$4**
**Cletus** *Other People's Girlfriends* 7-inch **$4**
**Connie Dungs** *Driving on Neptune* CD **$8** *(3 copies only!)*
**Connie Dungs** *Eternal Bad Luck Charm* CD **$8**
**Connie Dungs** *I Hate This Town!* 7-inch **$4**
**Connie Dungs** *No Chance* 7-inch **$4**
**Connie Dungs** self-titled CD **$8**
**Connie Dungs** *Songs for Swinging Nice Guys* CD **$8**
**Connie Dungs** *Turntable* SRCD **$5**
**Ded Bugs** *Raid in the Bug House* **SRCD $5**
**Dirt Bike Annie** *Hit the Rock!* CD **$8**
**Dirt Bike Annie** *Live Jersey City 2000* SRCD **$5**
**Egghead** *Dumb Songs for Smart People* CD **$8**
**FabHabs** *All I Know* **SRCD $5**
**Frantics** *Downtown Delirium* 7-inch **$4**
**Handgun Bravado** *Take Tomorrow* SRCD **$5**
**Impulse International** *Saturday Suzie* 7-inch **$4**
**Jon Cougar Concentration Camp** *Victoria's Secret Sauce* 7-inch **$4**
**Kung Fu Monkeys** *School's Out, Surf's Up, Let's Fall in Love* CD **$8**
**Loblaws** *Won't Stop!* 7-inch **$4**
**Mcrackins** *Raiding the Hen House* **SRCD $5**
**Mitochodriacs** *Autonomous Mitochondrial Release* SRCD **$5**
**Moral Crux** *Victim of Hype* 7-inch **$4**
**Mute-Ants** *Planet of the Mute-Ants* 7-inch **$4**
**Mute-Ants** *The Terrible Tunes of The Mute-Ants* CD **$8**
**Nogoods** *Better Than Beer* SRCD **$5**
**Peabodys** *Are Chick Repellent* SRCD **$5**
**Peabodys** *Dilemma* 7-inch **$4**
**Peabodys** *The Future Will Kill You* 7-inch **$4**
**Pullouts** *A Lot of Power Tool in a Little Space* 7-inch **$4**
**Radio Buzzkills** *Can't Wait Forever* **SRCD $5**
**Remotes** *Bitch Bitch Bitch* SRCD **$5**
**Rocknroll Television** *Stuck On My Mind* **SRCD $5**
**Ruth's Hat** *Bye Bye Love* CD **$8**
**Scratch Bongowax** *Dogpile on Liz* 7-inch **$4**
**Sicko** *A Brief History of Sicko* CD **$8**
**Sicko** *Three Tea* 7-inch **$4**
**Stink** *I Don't Want Anything That You've Got* 7-inch **$4**
**Teen Sensation Glasses** *Fuzzy* CD **$8**
**Underhand** *Connections* 7-inch **$4**
**Underhand** *Desire* 7-inch **$4**
**Various Artists** *No Band Photo* **DOUBLE** 7-inch **$4**
**Vista Blue** *Punching In* SRCD **$5**
**Wallys** *Take It Back* SRCD **$5**
**Wanna-Bes** *Saturday Night* 7-inch **$4**
**Werecats** *Are a Very Colourful Band* **SRCD $5**

## MUTANT POP BANDS ON OTHER LABELS

**After School Special** self-titled DOUBLE CD **$8**
**After School Special** self-titled LP **$10**
**Automatics** *Go Bananas!* LP **$10**
**Automatics** *Fortune Teller* 7-inch **$4**
**Automatics** *Murder/Suicide* CD **$8**
**Automatics** split w/Motives 7-inch **$4**
**Beautys** split w/Barnhills 7-inch **$4**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *113o Uomo* 7-inch **$4**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *8-Testicled Pogo Machine* CD **$8**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Gay* CD **$8**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Group Sex* CD **$8**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Little Yellow Box* 7-inch **$4**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Male Model* 7-inch **$4**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Megal Anal* CD **$8**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Saucer to Saturn* CD **$8**
**Boris the Sprinkler** split w/Meatmen 7-inch **$4**
**Boris the Sprinkler** split w/Moral Crux 7-inch **$4**
**Boris the Sprinkler** *Suck* CD **$8**
**Chubbies** *Sleeping in His T-Shirt* CD **$8**
**Ded Bugs** *Planet of Blood* CD **$8**
**Ded Bugs** *Songs for the Possessed and Insane* CD **$8**
**Ded Bugs** *Sugar-Coated Snot Pops* CD **$8**
**Dirt Bike Annie** *Hit the Rock* LP **$10**
**Dirt Bike Annie** split w/Popsters CD **$8**
**Egghead** *Would Like a Few Words With You* CD **$8**
**FabHabs** *The Fabulous Habs* **SRCD $5**
**Hissyfits** *Wish You Were Here* 7-inch **$4**
**Impulse International** *Arm the Girls* 7-inch **$4**
**Impulse International** *Hollywood Underground* 7-inch **$4**
**Impulse International** *Mini Album* 10-inch **$8**
**Impulse International** *The Real Kid* 7-inch **$4**
**Jimmies** *Christmas Carols* SRCD **$5**
**Kung Fu Monkeys** *Christmas for Breakfast* CD **$8**
**Kung Fu Monkeys** *Coast to Coast* 7-inch **$4**
**Kung Fu Monkeys** *Wedding Split* w/DBA DOUBLE 7" **$5**
**Mixelpricks** *After Darkness, Light* CD **$8**
**Mixelpricks** *Bitter?* CD **$8**
**Mixelpricks** *Breakfast Edition* CD **$8**
**Mixelpricks** *Majizmo* 7-inch **$4**
**Mixelpricks** *Pop-Punk is Dead* CD **$8**
**Moral Crux** *Revolution* 7-inch **$4**
**Mute-Ants** *Rollin' in the Thunder* 7-inch **$4**
**Peabodys** *All Out of You* CD **$8**
**Peabodys** *Awkward Age* 7-inch **$4**
**Peabodys** *Scared Shitless* CD **$8**
**Peabodys** *Twice as Nice* split w/Proteens CD **$8**
**Proms** *Second Base* CD **$8**
**Proteens** *Hot Lava Treatment* CD **$8**
**Proms** split w/ Grand Prixx 7-inch **$8**
**Proms** *Second Base* **CD $8**
**Ruth's Hat** *Bye Bye Love* **CD $8**
**Ruth's Hat** *Nostalgic for Right Now* **CD $8**
**Ruth's Hat** *Sloppy Poppy Punk Band* 7-inch **$4**
**Teen Sensation Glasses** self-titled CD **$8**
**Teen Sensation Glasses** split CD w/The Vents **$8**
**Vista Blue** *Hit the Floor!* 7-inch **$4**
**Vista Blue** *Seasons* LP **$10**
**Vista Blue** split w/The Zambonis 7-inch **$4**

This is Mutant Pop

MUTANTPOP@AOL.COM

# LINER NOTES

**Keep up with MP on Facebook**

A couple people have asked me what's up with the Mutant Pop website, which hasn't been updated in a decade. Simple answer: I lost my password. Long answer: I lost my password and I don't care.

Internet sales are nothing I want to spend time chasing. There are a number of mailorders specializing in that type of thing, please make use of them. I already keep myself more than busy as it stands. I have neither time nor energy to be constantly tweaking news and availability info on a website that few people are apt to watch without being cued to do so.

What I've decided to do — most of you realize this already — is to use my personal Facebook page as a de facto daily MP blog and information source. I'm on FB every day, it's virtually no extra time, and it frequently opens up a two-way conversation between me and you, which is something that doesn't happen when I am tweaking text on a boring html page. So if you're interested, friend me up on FB and pop in now and then to get the low-down:

**https://www.facebook.com/tim.davenport.984**

| | orange pigs | purple pigs | 2021 total |
|---|---|---|---|
| MP-1001 Remotes | 48 | 18 | **66** |
| MP-1005 The Peabodys | 45 | 31 | **76** |
| MP-1011 The Connie Dungs | 48 | 23 | **71** |
| MP-1022 Attention Deficit | 54 | 19 | **73** |
| MP-1024 The Hitchcocks | 60 | 18 | **78** |
| MP-1029 Nerd Gets the Girl | 60 | 12 | **72** |
| MP-1031 The Wallys | 86 | 23 | **109** |
| MP-1032 Beldons | 48 | 31 | **79** |
| MP-1033 The Nogoods | 54 | 10 | **64** |
| MP-1034 The All-Stars | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| MP-1039 Dirt Bike Annie | 54 | 12 | **66** |
| MP-1041 The Automatics | — | 52 | **52** |
| MP-1046 Whack-A-Mole | — | 90 | **90** |
| MP-1047 Ded Bugs | — | 46 | **46** |
| MP-1049 Handgun Bravado | 67 | 10 | **77** |
| MP-1050 The Mitochondriacs | 165 | 75 | **240** |
| MP-1051 Vista Blue | 102 | 48 | **150** |
| MP-1052 Werecats | — | 81 | **81** |
| MP-1053 Mcrackins | — | 140 | **140** |
| MP-1054 The FabHabs | — | 80 | **80** |
| MP-1056 R&R Television | — | 52 | **52** |
| MP-1057 The Radio Buzzkills | — | 50 | **50** |
| GRAND TOTALS (22 titles) | **891** | **921** | **1,812** |

**Another 1,000 SRCD discs bite the dust**

I burned the last of the purple "flying pig" SRCD blanks on December 30, 2021. This marks the end of my tenth order of 1,000 discs. If you're any good at math, you'll observe this makes a total of ten thousand Mutant Pop CD-Rs in the world. The odometer has been rolled... Thank you for your support!

To the left you will see the final tally of SRCDs burned in 2021. Promotional copies sent out for review or as samples to mailorders (marked "PROMO") are not included, nor are unnumbered complimentary band copies (marked "BAND"). Several dozen discs were spoiled in production, either by bad burns or (more frequently) by my handwriting errors. Also keep in mind that these are counts of copies made, not copies sold — I am holding a couple hundred unsold copies in inventory, unsurprisingly.

Included in the tally are numbered copies received by bands in lieu of a cash royalty or by buying or trading for additional numbered copies: Beldons (15), FabHabs (15), McRackins (75), Mitochondriacs (135), Vista Blue (75), Wallys (35), Werecats (10), and Whack-A-Mole (20). These $2 copies do not count against the initial 150 copy authorization.

Two thousand discs sounds like a lot, but when you break things down 21 ways it's not very many, is it? No worries, these numbers are on pace with my initial expectation, which was to sell about 100 per title after 12 months — more or less the break-even point on a project. Things are close enough that I'm not gonna get stressed if things never end up getting there.

Back in 2000–02, when more people were playing CDs and more of the bands releasing on MP were actively touring (and therefore inclined to take royalties in copies rather than cash), I ran through about 8,000 SRCDs to cover about 40 titles — which works out to about 200 per release. On top of that, a couple of the early ones got to around 500 — so you can guess where a few of the final titles landed.

My expectations are measured and things are proceeding about as anticipated. While I'm not to the break-even point, and may never get there, the monetary bleed this time around is managable, unlike my 2008 fiasco. This hit is a nicked finger with a paring knive versus a chainsaw gash to the torso, well within expectations for a hobby record label.

None of this would be possible without your support. Thanks again. —t.c.

**Got a recording? An idea for a SRCD project? Drop me a line at MutantPop@aol.com**
**In general I want to see demos submitted old school as CD-Rs. Prove that you care.**